

6. 'Kama' and 'Krodha'

The *Jiva* resides in the world. God resides in the heart. There is always an interplay which goes on between one and the other. People cry when they are born. People cry when they die. People cry even between birth and death for various things. We have, however, to ask, do people cry for obtaining real knowledge about the ultimate? Do they cry for the grace of God? Do they cry for understanding and realising God? In life, it is the desire of every human being to enjoy peace and happiness. But have we made an effort to know the real reason for lack of peace and happiness in our lives? Such lack of peace and lack of happiness can only be relieved when we know what we ought to know, when we forget what we ought to forget, when we reach the destination we ought to reach. In this, there are three main steps which will lead us to the knowledge of what should be known. There is a necessity for asking once more the questions: What is it that we should forget? What is it that we should know? What is it that we should reach? The answers are, we have to forget the aspect of *jiva*. We should know what our true self is. We have to reach Godhood. It is these three aspects that are being described to us by the three words *jiva*, *Easwara* and *Prakruthi*. It is to enable us and to let us know and understand the aspects and attributes of these three that the *Upanishads* exist. What has been called the *Bhautika* refers to the aspect of the body, what has been called the *Daivika* refers to the aspect of *Atma* or the soul and what has been referred to as the *Adhyatmika* refers to the aspect of *jiva*. What relates to the *jiva* is responsible for bondage. What relates to the *Atma* is for releasing everything that is in the nature of a bondage. The *Jiva Thathwa* binds itself whereas the *Atma Thathwa* releases everything. *Atma Thathwa* should be our basis.

You are not one person but three, namely, the one you think you are, the one others think you are and the one you really are. If

we are able to guide our lives, bearing these three aspects in mind, then it will be possible to some extent to get the *Atma Thathwa* into our lives. From time immemorial, great idealists, torch bearers and seers, have been teaching in our sacred country. It is because of the strength of Kali, who is now the ruling deity, such people who have been able to show us good paths are becoming more and more distant to us. We, in our turn, are getting ourselves attached to the material notions and pushing ourselves away from the spiritual path. It is easy to drive away people, but it is very hard to lead and make them follow you. Today, those who can lead and those who shall show the way are becoming fewer and fewer. By your good fortune and by your good deeds, you are getting these excellent opportunities of listening to experienced people who have lived good lives. They will be handing to you good ideas; and if you are able to absorb them firmly in your hearts, with devotion, there is going to be very considerable improvement in you.

It is known to every individual that it is the way of the world that people are after riches, after food grains, after precious metals like silver and gold, and so on. But truly, these are not our wealth, these are not our happiness and these are not the things that should be regarded as signifying our prosperity. Our good conduct is our true wealth. The Divine knowledge is the true riches that we should have. Proper action and proper conduct are our prosperity. It is only when we realise that these good qualities are what we should acquire as our riches and not the worldly pleasures, will we be justifying what has been told to you in the morning that, "*Janthoonam naranjanma durlabham.*" That means that amongst all the animals, to be born as a man is extraordinarily difficult. Therefore, you should give great attention to cultivating good conduct and good behaviour throughout your life. To be able to sleep, to be able to eat and to be afraid whenever there is fear are all common to man and to animals. These qualities do not distinguish a man from an animal. The only distinguishing feature that marks out man is that he has intelligence

or *buddhi*; and if man does not use his intelligence properly, he is just like an animal.

Some of you may be wondering why man has also been included amongst the category of animals. We should not understand the word animal as referring only to non-human animals. This word has its root in *jan*. Whatever is born is a *janthu*. Everything that is born from a mother's womb is called a *jan* or a *janthu*. Since man is also born from a mother, it is appropriate from the point of classification, that he should be regarded as one of the animals. Man should be taken as having got that name because he has been born from a mother like all the animals.

In what you have been hearing, the philosophy of non-dualism or *adwaita* is one of the most important things. Sankara stated that *Brahman* is Truth and that the world is a *mithya*. If we take this statement consisting of two halves and try to prove that what you see in the world is all unreal, you will be wasting your time. On the other hand, we should also take the statement that the entire world is covered or is contained by Vishnu. If we put these two statements together, then the enquiry will proceed on proper lines. But these two statements look as if they are contradicting each other. On the one side, we say that the entire world is only a manifestation of the Lord. You should note here that when Sankara said *Brahma Sathyam*, he did not say that the world is *asathya* or untrue. He used a special word *mithya*. So we have to know the meaning of the word *mithya*. The word *mithya* should be explained by saying that it means neither "true" nor "untrue". It is something between truth and untruth. It is really true-untrue, *sad-asath*. What we are seeing around us, with our own eyes, gives us the impression that they are all true. But what we think is true, in the next moment vanishes and we don't see it, and when we don't see it, the same thing that we thought was true, we now think is untrue. What was not seen some time ago comes back. Then what we thought was untrue appears to us as true. Thus you see that some of it appears as true and when that disappears, the same thing appears as untrue. Therefore,

we have to describe this world neither as true nor as untrue but both as true and untrue. The appropriate Sanskrit word is *sadasath*.

In these manifestations that are partly true and partly untrue, there is one which is of a permanent nature and which we should recognise. There may be many amongst those who have assembled here who are used to going to cinemas. When you go there, the first thing you see is a screen. We cannot see or look at that blank screen for any length of time with pleasure. We will become impatient, and we will be looking back at the projector and at all other places from where the pictures have to come. After some time, some of the pictures come and they exhibit themselves on the screen. They are moving away from the screen. Some of those that have gone away from the screen are not just going away permanently. They are coming back again and again to the screen. Therefore, the coming and the going of these pictures in a repetitive manner is a sort of manifestation. When we say that the world is *mithya*, you have to take the world not as the inanimate part of it but as the whole of it representing the conglomeration of all the living beings. They are all undergoing the cycle of being born and then dying and going out. At any instant of time, a large number of people are coming in by being born and going out by dying. Therefore, this coming in and going out into this world should be compared with the pictures coming in and going out on the screen. That is the *mithya*, which we have to understand as the characteristic of the world.

But we have to make an enquiry as to what is it that supports these pictures that come and go. On the screen they come, and from the screen they go. If the screen is not there, it is not possible for you to see any of this coming and going. When the pictures actually come there, where is the screen? You don't see it separately. It is part and parcel of the picture. So, you should realise that the permanently existing screen, the true screen gets mixed up and combines with the transient or coming and going pictures. Then only will you understand that what is true is the screen and what is not true are the pictures. The screen is not coming and going. Here, the permanent

screen should be compared to the permanent basis or the support for the entire world and that is the *Brahman*. That permanent basis, *Brahman*, when it gets mixed up and combines with these impermanent or transient people who come and go, then you get the picture of the world like the picture you see in cinema. That is why we say, “*Sarvam Vishnu mayam jagath.*” This process, by which the untrue or transient pictures and the true and the somewhat permanent screen are together combining and giving you an impression of permanence, may be called the *Vishnu maya* of the *jagath*. The word *Vishnu* here should not be understood to refer to an individual wearing his insignia like the *Sankha*, *Chakra* and so on. The word *Vishnu* here stands for omnipresence.

Sankara recognised that in the *mithya* or in this mixture of truth and untruth, there is truth. That is how, when he said, “*Brahma Sathyam, jagath mithya,*” he recognised that there is truth in this world and that aspect of truth has to be conveyed and has to be taught to people. That is the reason why he made an effort to establish four *peethas* all round this country, the main purpose of which was to convey the truthful contents of this statement and to give knowledge and wisdom to all the people concerned. By Divine grace, these four *peethas* have been serving as a fort-like wall around our country. Unfortunately, as time went on, we allowed this fort to become dilapidated. Through the walls have come what are called the methods of “Western civilisation”. As a result of that, we have neglected our own culture, and we have forgotten our ancient traditions, and today we are behaving like animals. Thus, it is very essential that we should recall to our mind the sacredness of the Indian culture, the way of life which Indian culture has taught us and recognise that there is a oneness in all the manifold teachings on life. We should put them into practice and teach it to others.

In our culture, we have been taught to examine and enquire and say, “Oh, this is not what I am seeking, this is not what I am seeking.” Thereby we give up all that is transient in the world and fix our attention ultimately on that permanent Divine soul. And this

is what our *Vedanta* has been teaching us as the right path. When we begin to follow it, at the elementary stages, we ask ourselves the questions: “Am I the body? Am I the mind? Am I the *Antha Karana*?” There is no better process of realising ourselves than to make this kind of enquiry. If you have the belief that you are the body, then what is the meaning of the statement we generally make, namely, “my body”? Who is the “my” and who is the “body”? When you say “my body,” it means that “my” is something separate and distinct from the body. Again when you say “my mind,” it means that “my” is separate from “mind.” In the same manner, we are enjoying and we are experiencing all these things by saying “these are mine.” We are not saying separately “I”. It is only when you make a proper enquiry about this “I” and realise that the “I” is neither the body nor the mind, you would have steadfastly put yourself in the philosophy of non-dualism. The teachings of *Vedanta* take you through the statements “this is not I,” “this is not I,” “this is not I” until you are able to realise what the “I” is.

When Rama, along with Lakshmana and Sita, was moving in the forest and talking to several *rishis*, there used to be congregations where the women used to sit on one side and the *rishis* used to sit on the other side and discussions used to take place. In the place where all the women were sitting, Sita also joined them. Rama and Lakshmana, because they were living in the forest and because they were wearing clothes appropriate to the forest were also looking like the *rishis*. However between the two, Rama was showing a certain amount of divine Light.

In the place where Sita was sitting, some of the women went to her and asked, “Have you come alone or have you come along with your husband as well?” She replied that her husband too had come. With the women wanting to see and find out who her husband was, they were asking her many questions. Sita, a sacred woman given to righteous conduct all her life, would not get up when all the *Rishis* were present and say, “Here is my husband,” by way of introduction. She would not do that; and knowing what was passing

through Sita's mind and recognising her reluctance to get up and point to her husband, one of the women asked Sita by pointing at one of the men, "Is that person your husband?" She then replied in the negative by just nodding her head. Another woman came and asked her, "Is that person whose hair is tied up in knots your husband?" She again nodded her head in the negative. In this way, when many women came and asked Sita, pointing at the wrong person and asking the question, "Is that your husband?" she was nodding her head to indicate a negative reply. When Rama who was sitting there was actually pointed out, Sita said neither "yes" nor "no". She simply exhibited a significant, happy and pleasant smile.

Our *Vedanta* teaches us something which is exactly similar to this story. If you point at the wrong thing and if that is not the supreme reality, then you say "no". Anything that is shown and is not the right thing should call forth the comment, "this is not that," "this is not that," and so on. When you put your finger on supreme reality, the *Brahman*, then you are in supreme bliss and happiness. Such is the nature of *Vedanta* that we are able to give today to you, young students, with pure and unwavering hearts. I am glad that you are attempting to acquire the good things of our culture and the teachings we are giving you.

You are also being told a few things about *maya*. Just as our own shadow will always accompany us and will not separate from us, so also *maya* will always accompany God and will not separate from Him. There is a very good illustration of this fact in the *Ramayana*. At the time Rama, accompanied by Lakshmana and Sita, was moving in the forest, because the forest was a thick one and there were no wide roads and they could only follow a narrow path; the way they were walking was such that Rama was going in front, immediately behind him was Sita, and Lakshmana came behind Sita. In this way, all the three, Rama, Sita and Lakshmana were moving forward along a narrow path. In order to be able to recognise and understand this situation, you hold up your three fingers. The first finger represents Rama, God, or *Paramatma*. The second finger imme-

diately behind represents Sita or *maya*. The last finger in this row of three, represents Lakshmana or the *jiva*.

Paramatma, *maya*, and *jiva*, these three are going along in a narrow path in the wild forest of life. After a little while, Lakshmana, whom we have symbolised as *jiva*, has got the desire and the ambition to have a look at God or *Paramatma*. What is it that he has to do in order to fulfil his desire? There are only two ways of looking at Rama or getting his *darshan*. One is for Sita, who is in between, to move away a little and let Lakshmana have the *darshan* of Rama. Alternatively, if Sita insists on staying where she is, Lakshmana has to move aside a little. To get Sita to move away, he may have to push her out from the place where she is standing, but then he will be offending Rama. So what Lakshmana did was to pray to Sita in all humility and ask her to give him a chance of having *darshan* of Rama. Sita, in all her graciousness and in all her kindness, said, "Yes, certainly you can have the *darshan* of Rama," and just stepped out a little. So if you get angry with *maya*, and if you want to use force and your own strength on *maya* and push her out of her place and then have the *darshan* of the Lord, you will not succeed. *Maya* then will become angry and will play tricks with you. Not only that, God will not allow such a thing to be done. The only way, therefore, to fulfil your ambition is to recognise that *maya* is the inseparable shadow of God Himself and pray in all humility and ask for an opportunity by which *maya* will stand aside.

You have been told by some of the lecturers that we are born, and are getting entangled in the cycle of birth and death on account of some actions we may have done or out of ignorance. Moreover, after we are born, we get all kinds of desires. The getting of these desires and harbouring them has been called *kama*, and when these desires are not fulfilled to the extent you want them to be fulfilled, then you become angry. That has been called *krodha*. These two qualities, *kama* and *krodha*, the desire and the anger, are responsible for all our troubles and sorrows.

In these aspects, the *Ramayana* has given us a very good lesson. When we read the *Ramayana*, we should ask ourselves the question, what is the reason and who is responsible for sending Rama into exile in the forest? In replying to such a question, some people put the blame on Kaikeyi, some people put the blame on the foolish father, Dasaratha, some people put the blame on Manthara, who was the attendant, and so on. But when we read the appropriate sections of the *Ramayana* and try to examine the basis for this particular act in the *Ramayana*, we will find that in some sections it has been said that Rama, when he was a very young child, was playing with a ball and that ball fell on this ugly-looking attendant Manthara, who accompanied Kaikeyi. From that day Manthara entertained some hatred and jealousy toward Rama. In addition to this, because Manthara was an attendant who came with Kaikeyi from the Kingdom of Kekaya, from where Kaikeyi came, it so happened that she was not very happy with, or friendly to the sons of other queens. She was only attached to the son of Kaikeyi. Because she could not do anything when the ball, which was hit by Rama came and hit her on the back, which was an ugly hunchback, she was letting the hatred grow inside herself. She was waiting to take revenge at the appropriate time. This is the normal worldly explanation for things; but for these things to happen, the original root cause is Rama's own wish. When the time came for putting Rama on the throne, then she found the opportunity, and she schemed and did everything, by which she could achieve what she wanted to, by sending Rama to the forest.

When Rama, along with Lakshmana and Sita, was spending his time in exile on the Chitrakuta mountain, it so happened that Surpanakha came and saw Rama and wanted to marry him. For this bad desire of hers, Lakshmana gave her an appropriate punishment. Then she went back to Ravana and did all that was necessary to incite Ravana to go and get hold of Sita, who was leading a life of devotion to her husband. Although the *Ramayana* is a very large book, an extensive epic, you will find that these two names, Manthara and Surpanakha, who really have a considerable responsibility, have not

been shown in any extensive manner anywhere in the epic. They appear only in one or two insignificant places. But these two, although they appear very insignificant in the totality of the story, determine the whole story of the *Ramayana*. For Rama, who used to live in Ayodhya, to go to the forest, for Sita, who used to live in the forest with her husband Rama, to go to Lanka, Ravana's place—the responsibility for these two happenings rests on Manthara and Surpanakha.

Having stated that for the whole of the *Ramayana*, Manthara and Surpanakha are responsible, we have to recognise that these two are not just individuals. Surpanakha signifies desires with attachment. Manthara signifies anger with vengeance. These two represent *kama* and *krodha*. *Kama* and *krodha* or lust and anger are responsible for all kinds of difficult experiences which we have in our lives. But how are we to conquer these desires? How are we to get the upper hand over these desires? So long as we live in this world there are bound to be desires, but we should not really become so despondent that we give up the attempt to conquer these desires. You may desire many things. You may experience many things you had desired; but if you are able to treat your desires as well as your experiences to be such as arising in the name of God, then there will be some amount of happiness. When we only worship nature and when we want to enjoy all that we see around us in the world and do not think of God and forget about the existence of the Divine, we are not going to be happy at all.

The *Ramayana* contains an illustration of what can be gained from sacrifice and what can be lost through desire. Because Rama started to go to the forest, Sita prayed in many different ways, using many arguments to get his consent to go with him to the forest. She sacrificed all her happiness, she sacrificed her bodily comfort and she gave up everything by way of worldly pleasures. Thus she sought, by giving up all desires or *kama*, to be with Rama. For Sita, who sacrificed everything, all her happiness and all her riches and all her worldly pleasures, unhappily there came a moment when she was

attracted by a golden deer. The moment her sacrifice had turned into her attraction to this golden deer, Rama became distant from her.

The *Ramayana* is a text that contains such sacred inner meanings for every little episode in it. But the *Ramayana*, at times, got misinterpreted by various people as an ordinary story where some bad man took away the wife of another person and that this person tried to get back his wife and that it is the story of a family quarrel involving women, and so on. That kind of feeling about the *Ramayana* is not only wrong, but is also born out of ignorance. When we realise that the *Ramayana* is a sacred text that contains several lessons for us and shows us the way to reach the Divine, then only will we understand its full significance. Whether it be the *Upanishads*, or the *Ramayana*, or the *Bharatha*, or the *Bhagavatha*, you find in them such stories which have invaluable and sacred inner meanings. Just by reading the words and getting a superficial meaning, you are not realising the inner meanings contained in these sacred texts. In order that you may understand the inner meaning, you should come in contact with the experienced people who are now teaching you, and benefit from their experience and their scholarship. You should then put into practice what you learn. You will then know the value of our traditions.

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